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History of the Omaha Farmers Market

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Promoting local food is an Omaha tradition

The Mercer Family Vision

Promoting local food is an Omaha tradition

The Omaha Farmers Market traces its roots back nearly 100 years, beginning at the turn of the last century on the corner of 11th and Jackson Street. This was the site of Omaha's "City Market," a very popular farmers market that local residents and grocers relied on for their produce and fresh goods. Until 1964, this was where growers came to sell everything from fruits and vegetables to herbs and honey.

After a hiatus of 30 years, the Omaha Farmers Market was revived in 1994 on the very corner lot where the original market thrived. Fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods and flowers were once again available each Saturday morning from May to mid-October. Today, the Market has expanded to fill 11th Street from Jackson to Howard streets with approximately 100 vendors each Saturday.

In 2005, Holiday Market began as a partnership with the Holiday Lights Festival in the Old Market. In 2010, the Holiday Market moved to Askarben Village during the first

weekend of December in partnership with Physicians Mutual and WOWT.

2010 marked additional expansion, when the Omaha Farmers Market added another day to “buy local and eat fresh” at Aksarben Village in Midtown every Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends.

From 2011 to 2018, the Omaha Farmers Market created the opportunity for an underserved community to purchase fresh, local produce at the Charles Drew Health Center in North Omaha. This market was the first in Omaha where customers could use WIC coupons obtained through the Charles Drew Health Center. Also in 2011, all Omaha Farmers Market locations began to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Omaha Farmers Market was the first in the state to offer this convenient benefit to shoppers. In 2018, the SNAP program expanded into the Double Food Buck Program, which is a national model.

The Mercer Family Vision

The story of the history of the Old Market can't be told without Sam Mercer's lasting vision. Mercer protected Omaha's historic buildings and redeveloped the area in the 1960s by transitioning buildings from produce warehouses to the modern storefront businesses and restaurants we see today. Mercer will forever be remembered as the "founder" of the historic Old Market. Mercer's son, Mark Mercer, operated the family's management firm for many years. Mark's wife, Vera Mercer, has now carried on the tradition of managing the firm and supporting the Market!

Sam Mercer, 1921-2013

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May 7 *thru* October 16th

OLD MARKET (http://omahafarmersmarket.com/old-market/)
11th & Jackson
Saturdays
8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

AKSARBEN VILLAGE (http://omahafarmersmarket.com/aksarben-village/)
67th & Mercy Road
Sundays
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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(https://oldmarket.com/)

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(https://www.physiciansmutual.com/cs/home/home.html)

(https://www.snbconnect.com/home.aspx)

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